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LATIN AMERICA

KHRUSHCHEV THREATENS RETALIATORY BLOW IF CUBA IS ATTACKED

Khrushchev's warning in his 27 February election speech that the Soviet Union would strike a "crushing blow" in defense of Cuba, or any other socialist country, constitutes the sharpest such warning to appear in post-crisis propaganda. Khrushchev pointedly recalls that Malinovskiy on Armed Forces Day (22 February) had given "a determined warning" to some "transatlantic public figures who were playing with fire." Followup comment repeatedly calls attention to the threat and seeks to underline and emphasize the "seriousness" of Khrushchev's words.

Although Khrushchev recalls the withdrawal of Soviet rockets and IL-28 bombers from Cuba (routinely explaining this as a quid pro quo for a U.S. no-invasion pledge), he remains silent on the issue of Soviet troop withdrawal. Peking has played up press reports of an impending troop pullout, in its continuing effort to picture the Soviet Union as a compliant and tractable participant in the Cuban controversy.

Current Moscow comment is silent or vague on how the USSR would react to a new naval quarantine of Cuba, and propagandists ridicule Washington reports on Castro's program to train and organize Latin American subversive agents.

Khrushchev, Malinovskiy Threats Depart From Recent Caution

Khrushchev's warning closely follows and, Moscow says, "confirms" Malinovskiy's Armed Forces Day declaration that an attack on Cuba would trigger World War III.* Neither Soviet leader goes so far as to specify that an attack on Cuba would evoke "rocket" retaliation against the United States, but the current warnings nevertheless represent a marked departure from the very guardedly formulated promises of assistance to Cuba which Moscow has used since the crisis. Since October, Moscow has customarily resorted to vague promises that Cuba will not be left "defenseless" or "in the lurch" in the face of U.S. attack. And its propaganda showed marked restraint in its reaction to such developments as the President's reception of the Playa Giron prisoners in Miami.

* The 11 September 1962 TASS statement on Cuba had warned that an attack on Cuba would be "the beginning of the unleashing of war."

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Malinovskiy's traditional speech on Armed Forces Day projects an image of an invincible Soviet military power which has effectively deterred and will continue to deter Western "aggression." He gives special weight to the role of the strategic rocket troops but brandishes a defensive capability against all Western weapons systems, including the Polaris. Despite this muscle flexing, his allegations of Western intentions are relatively mild. Thus he gives more play to charges of Western fanning of war "hysteria" than to charges of actual preparations of war. He implies, at the same time, that the objectives of this campaign were limited to "grosser interference in the affairs of Cuba, right up to the waging of aggressive war." Khrushchev, while not brandishing Soviet rocketry in the fashion Malinovskiy does, makes the more belligerent charge that "madmen" are "pushing the U.S. Government onto a criminal and perfidious path for the invasion of Cuba."

Propaganda Stresses "Seriousness" of Retaliatory Warning

Khrushchev's warning is echoed repeatedly in subsequent Moscow propaganda, which emphasizes the "serious" nature of his message to "U.S. hotheads." Commentators thus seek to play up rather than to soften or qualify Khrushchev's words. A widely broadcast PRAVDA article by Zhukov on the 28th declares that "the head of the Soviet Government has explained with utmost clarity...that if an attack is made on Cuba or on any other socialist country,* the Soviet Union will come to the assistance of its friends and deal a devastating blow." Zhukov stresses that Khrushchev's remarks were a "confirmation" of Malinovskiy's earlier warning to "the wild men."

In reporting foreign press reaction, Moscow points to the emphasis placed on Khrushchev's warning in the United States, but indicates that European papers welcomed his "calm tone" in discussing international affairs and his support for the principle of peaceful coexistence. Both Zhukov and IZVESTIYA commentator Polyanov assert that Cuba has become a political issue in the United States. The former repeats Khrushchev's references to the struggle between the "donkey" and the "elephant," and warns that this quarrel now centers on the "explosive question of Cuba." Polyanov pictures Khrushchev's warning as "a cold shower" for the "hotheads" and says that "this is precisely the manner in which Khrushchev's warning words were interpreted everywhere on the planet." He adds that the Soviet leader's "new warning" should compel the administration to realize that "the warlike dance...of the New York Governor and his Senatorial friends" leads inevitably to "the abyss."

* Khrushchev had specified the CPR, DPRK, DRV, and GDR in promising that the Soviet Union would come to the defense of its "friends." Followup comment singles out only Cuba in paraphrasing or describing the warning.

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Moscow Propaganda Avoids Troop Removal Question

In the context of his discussion of the alleged U.S. "pledge" not to invade Cuba, Khrushchev mentions the Soviet withdrawal of rockets and IL-28 bombers but follows the line of Moscow propaganda in avoiding the issue of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Cuba. Thus in reporting the 19 February White House conference of Congressional leaders, which was followed by the announcement of the promised withdrawal of "several thousand" Soviet troops, TASS notes only that the conference covered "the situation in Cuba and other regions." A Kozyakov commentary to North America on 26 February skirts the troops issue in claiming there was no basis for the "hysteria" in Washington: "Last fall...the nation's leaders tried to justify their anti-Cuban actions by pointing to the Soviet missiles and military experts in Cuba. The pretext has since disappeared, but the anti-Cuban hysteria continues."

The first reference in Soviet media to troops appears in the TASS account of the President's 6 March press conference. TASS ignores a question regarding the number of troops and the rate and verification of their withdrawal. But it claims that the President cited "the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba" as one of the factors preventing a normalization of relations with Cuba. (The President did not in fact specify troops in this passage; he stated that "we regard the present Soviet presence in Cuba as unacceptable to us...". It is possible that TASS' use of the word "troops" was inadvertent.)

Moscow's current effort to gloss over the issue of withdrawal is consistent with the past practice of generally keeping silent on the presence of Soviet forces in Cuba. Reports of Secretary Rusk's 10 December press conference and the President's 20 November press conference omitted references made on both occasions to the presence of Soviet military forces on the island.

In contrast to Moscow, Peking promptly reports (on 22 February) "the forthcoming Soviet withdrawal of several thousand military personnel from Cuba," and notes Congressional demands for further and complete removal of all Soviet forces. NCNA cites expressions of U.S. "gratitude" over the development and, sharpening the Chinese image of the Soviet Union as a compliant participant in the Cuban controversy, reports Senator Russell as saying that "there is no reason to believe that the United States made concessions to the Soviet Union to obtain the withdrawal." Havana media have made no particular issue of the withdrawal, briefly citing reports of the pullout but refraining from comment.

Moscow has shown considerably more reticence on the troop issue than it did in connection with the removal of the Ilyushin bombers late last

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year, when Soviet media reported Castro's letter to U Thant agreeing to removal of the "obsolete" planes and the President's 20 November announcement of a Soviet agreement to remove the bombers within 30 days. Though Moscow did not directly announce the bomber removal on its own authority, Soviet commentators did refer to the action-- sparingly--in speaking of a quid pro quo that involved the lifting of the naval blockade and a U.S. no-invasion pledge. Comment dwelt almost entirely on the reasons for the bombers' removal rather than on the fact of the removal itself.

Calls for New Quarantine Called "Highly Provocative"

Current Moscow propaganda conveys no suggestion as to how the Soviet Union would react to the reestablishment of a new naval quarantine around Cuba. A TASS commentary on 5 March refers to a LIFE magazine editorial calling for such a quarantine, but says only that such an act "would clearly violate international law and would be highly provocative in nature." TASS hints that a blockade would involve war by saying that the LIFE editorial "pretends" such a move would "constitute a method of 'dealing with Cuba short of war.'" At the same time, the TASS account of the President's press conference reports factually and without comment that, in response to a correspondent's suggestion that the United States take steps to prevent oil from reaching Cuba, the President said "that this would require a blockade and that a blockade is an act of war." TASS also says he "emphasized" that war in the Caribbean is not to the advantage of the United States.

Moscow Beams New Program to Soviet Citizens Living in Cuba

Coincident with a sharp cutback in its daily Spanish-language broadcasts to Cuba, Radio Moscow on 5 March added a new program apparently intended for Russians in Cuba. Addressed to "Soviet citizens outside our country," the Russian-language cast follows a regular Spanish-to-Cuba program and is on the same frequency. Information so far available indicates that the programs contain routine Moscow newscast material and reviews of the content of PRAVDA.

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THE NEAR EAST

BLOC CHARGES WESTERN COMPLICITY IN IRAQI COUP

Moscow's protest campaign against the "persecution" of communists and "other patriots" in Iraq began to subside following the 26 February PRAVDA editorial charging the "imperialists" with attempts to fan civil war and complicate Iraq's relations with the socialist states. Picking up this theme, an Arabic-language broadcast the following day asserted that the West was "well aware" that "depriving Iraq of the mighty support of the socialist countries" makes colonialist intervention in the country's affairs "easier than before." The radio again protested, in a tone of injured innocence, against "the blatant lies bandied around in the West" that Radio Moscow is encouraging the Kurds to rise against the Iraqi authorities; the truth, it said, is that the Kurds "are prompted by their just national claims."

Peking joined in briefly, NCNA disseminating a rash of protests by CPR organizations along with a PEOPLE'S DAILY article of 23 February routinely attacking the "imperialists" for trying to disrupt Arab unity and undermine Arab national independence.

Bloc comment has made increasingly specific charges of Western involvement in preparation for the coup. A 27 February BRATISLAVA PRAVDA article declared that this "unprecedented" rule of terror was "jointly prepared by home and foreign reaction--the United States." At a 22 February press conference in Prague, reported by CTK, Iraqi leftists issued a statement charging that "certain quarters in Washington, London, and Bonn" were connected with the recent coup. CTK added that one of the Iraqis, poet al-Jawahiri, "called attention to the connection between the February coup and the U.S. secret service." The Hungarian MAGYAR NEMZET declared on 22 February that "the CIA inspired, the British supported, and Nasir approved the coup," and attributed to the French weekly L'EXPRESS a report of contacts in Munich between the former president of the Iraqi Council of State, Najib ar-Rubayi, and a "high-ranking American official." (The same story appeared in a broadcast of the clandestine radio Peyk-e Iran.)

Iraqi Leftists in Prague Assail Regime Over Clandestine Radio

Prague begins to emerge as a center for Iraqi leftists in exile, and Prague broadcasts in Arabic continue to belabor the Arif regime. CTK, reporting the press conference held in Prague by nine former Iraqi officials on 22 February, identified Aziz al-Haj as the "only communist" among them; reviewing a 21 February RUDE PRAVO article by al-Haj,